

Tuesday, February 28, 2012

Hearing at the Labor Committee

Testimony in support of raising the minimum wage, HB 5291

From Nicole Andrews, Middletown

Good Afternoon Representative Zalaski and Senator Prague. I am here to speak in support of raising the minimum wage and eliminating the "tip credit" that lets employers in the service industry pay their workers even less than that.

Although I have a job in a grocery warehouse that pays a reasonable wage, they will only make me a part-time worker and I am not allowed to work more than 27 hours a week there so that they don't have to give me benefits. Many people in this economy have been forced into part-time jobs. This means I make only slightly more money as I would working full-time at the minimum wage.

Since this is still not enough to cover my rent and other expenses, I have had to take a second job bartending in the evenings, again, like many people these days. Here, however, I make much, much less - since I might receive tips, my employer does not pay me more than \$5.16 an hour. With this additional income my bills will be paid and I won't be evicted, but I am just making do by the skin of my teeth. It is still a struggle every week to keep food on the table- let alone spend money on luxuries like going out to dinner or buying a new dress.

The difference it would make if my job bartending paid nine dollars an hour would be huge. I would not have to constantly worry about how much I'd have left for food at the end of every month. I might even be lucky enough to do more than break even each week, and be able to spend money on the things beyond essentials that stimulate economic growth in our state. Raising the minimum wage would not just benefit young, working people like me, but the whole state along with us.